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**NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY**  
**NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE**

International Conflict and US National  
Security Policy into the 21st Century

Longer Essay

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Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE <b>1994</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-1994 to 00-00-1994</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>International Conflict and US National Security Policy into the 21st Century</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>National War College, 300 5th Avenue, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 20319-6000</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>see report</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>45</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

## **International Conflict and US National Security Policy into the 21st Century**

### **Introduction**

Global politics are undergoing rapid and extensive changes, and the resulting flux has engendered a significant debate within the United States concerning which policies to adopt in the post-bipolar international system. Defining contemporary United States (US) national security requirements within the changing context of armed conflict in global affairs has become a key element in this debate.<sup>1</sup> This study is intended to examine how armed conflict in the post-Cold War world is likely to affect the structure and operation of the international system, and the formulation and implementation of US national security policy within that system.<sup>2</sup>

A comprehensive empirical approach is used in the analysis to develop a more consistent and correct understanding of conflict in world affairs, but its substantive focus includes only those categories of fighting that are either present or projected in the international system.<sup>3</sup> It is already clear that patterns of armed conflict in world affairs will not simply be a continuation of hostilities that prevailed in the Cold War.<sup>4</sup> The US-USSR superpower confrontation has ended, but violence has become more prominent among lesser powers on the peripheries of the international system.<sup>5</sup> By examining these developments from the perspectives of the international system and US national security interests, the effects of transformations in armed conflict can be accurately assessed and their policy implications understood beyond the fleeting present.<sup>6</sup>

### **A Historical Perspective on International Conflict**

#### **Paradigms of Violence**

Although one has to use a certain amount of caution with "watershed" dates in history, most scholars agree that the legal and political structure of the modern world originated in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). It provided legal recognition for states and a state system independent of the Papacy, concepts which have guided international relations since that time.<sup>7</sup> The Treaty also marked the end of an era of conflict in the world. Religion largely ceased to be an element in conflicts between states, but other instigating factors appeared as prominent features of the post-Westphalian international system. A historical survey of inter-state conflict conducted by the 1925 Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, for example, concluded that there were more

than 250 causes of war between states, listed under the four general categories of political, economic, social, and psychological.<sup>8</sup>

A second study of war in international politics, undertaken by Quincy Wright, demonstrated that from 1480 to 1940, practically all states fought internationally, domestically, or both.<sup>9</sup> He also found that "the great powers have been the most frequent fighters," and that the intensity and extensiveness of fighting among the great powers was of greatest significance for the international system.<sup>10</sup> Such wars had the most far-reaching effects on the structure and operation of international politics because they often led to fundamental revisions in the norms of conduct that guided states' behavior.<sup>11</sup> For example, ideology became a force in international relations with the Napoleonic Wars. The crusading nationalist zeal of the French in extending their revolution to other countries led states for the first time to fight not only to protect their territory, but also to defend their internal system of government.<sup>12</sup> The extremes to which regimes would go to sustain their own position or attack that of others made the Napoleonic Wars the most violent since Westphalia.<sup>13</sup>

The influence of war on international politics, however, was not limited to its conduct or immediate outcome. The prolonged and catastrophic violence of the Napoleonic Wars led to the establishment of a new aspect of the international system to control conflict--the Concert of Europe process. The Concert sought, through the establishment of a rudimentary international political organization, to avoid war by reorganizing relationships among states to maintain the status quo.<sup>14</sup> The theory of international relations adopted by the Concert was that states could prevent wars by conferring before using military power.<sup>15</sup> Although ultimately unsuccessful, the Concert engendered a principle of international cooperation that foreshadowed even more far-reaching efforts following World Wars I & II to reconcile the different interests of states without war through structures intended to regulate their relations.<sup>16</sup>

Another critical component of the great powers' behavior between the Treaty of Westphalia and the Cold War was that their national security requirements were heavily influenced by the perils they posed to each other. This happened for several reasons. First, as Wright noted, the great powers frequently fought amongst themselves. Second, they posed the greatest threat to each other. To protect one's internal regime, it was necessary to prevent or defeat attacks that could be mounted by other great powers.<sup>17</sup> Third, their interests were most likely to collide.

World War I, for example, emerged out of competition for the spoils of the Ottoman Empire on the fringes of Europe.<sup>18</sup> An important consequence of this condition was that the threats the great powers posed to each other dominated the military component of their overall foreign policy.<sup>19</sup> The strategy, weapons, and armed forces structure they adopted were determined by this threat.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Great Power Paradigm in the Cold War**

This paradigm of conflict had its origins in American national security requirements when the United States achieved great power status at the opening of the 20th century.<sup>21</sup> Color-coded war plans developed prior to World Wars I & II--representing single enemy countries and a combination of enemies America would most likely fight--defined the US threat environment and derivative calculations of its security requirements.<sup>22</sup> During the Cold War, the threat of a great power engagement continued to pervade America's national security framework.<sup>23</sup> The Soviet Union posed the greatest threat to America; the two states' had competing national interests; and, the likelihood of war was sufficient to constitute a "clear and present" danger to the United States. Under these circumstances, the fulfillment of US national security requirements was, to a large extent, a function of overcoming the threat posed by the USSR.<sup>24</sup>

The bipolar system of international politics created by the US-USSR confrontation provided an encompassing paradigm to direct US thought and action throughout the world.<sup>25</sup> Policies were evaluated in ways that tended to reduce every problem of international relations to the common denominator of its implications for the bipolar equation.<sup>26</sup> The decisionmaking framework embraced by the United States during the Cold War emphasized the importance of a single, dominant axis of conflict and interpreted regional actors and issues throughout the international system within this concept.<sup>27</sup>

The bipolar world, moreover, made virtually any armed conflict in the international system representative of the more important political struggle between the United States and Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup> What rendered the wars in Korea and Vietnam critical for the United States, for example, was not the expansionism of North Korea and North Vietnam, but the containment of the global force of international communism perceived as centered in Moscow.<sup>29</sup> During the Cold War, furthermore, the military threats posed to the United States by states in the developing world were generally treated as "lesser-included" threats, for which US forces were deemed adequately prepared by virtue of their preparation for the East-West conflict.<sup>30</sup>

The Cold War allowed the United States to maintain the great power paradigm as a policy construct in interpreting international conflict and relating it to US national security goals. Although, unlike earlier periods, a great power war did not occur, America's assessment of its national security requirements remained based primarily on the threat of conflict with the USSR. This framework provided a set of unifying themes that shaped US thinking about virtually everything happening abroad, and it established a set of principles within which the bulk of US concerns about international conflict and America's attitudes toward it could be organized and explained.

### **Paradigm Lost in the "New World Order"**

Assessments of the global implications of the passing of the bipolar world have focused on the notion that, stripped of the enforced stability of the Cold War, an "unprecedented" and "dangerous" global surge of powerful ethnic, religious, and irredentist forces has appeared that threatens to undermine the established code of conduct in world affairs.<sup>31</sup> The presence of nationalist, ethnic, and religious conflicts is not new to international politics, however. Historically, conflicts have occurred as local and regional actors attempted to seize power in the vacuum created by the collapse of empires. For example, the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 took place against the backdrop of the fall of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>32</sup> Once the first war was over (against the empire), the victors fell out among themselves over the division of spoils and a new war ensued. Numerous other historical examples exist that make wars precipitated by the collapse of central authority in the former Soviet Union seem tame by comparison.<sup>33</sup>

A more significant development for understanding contemporary international violence and its relationship to US national security is the absence of a great power paradigm that determines patterns of conflict in world politics. The prospect of fighting among the great powers no longer dominates relations among states, and America's national security requirements no longer rest chiefly on perceptions of the threat of conflict with other great powers. Consequently, the great power paradigm no longer serves as a primary factor in the explanation of US policies toward international conflict because it has ceased to control US calculations of the need for military power, the kind of power required, and the use of that power in the international system.<sup>34</sup>

In his 1994 "Annual Report to the President and the Congress," former Defense Secretary Les Aspin noted the critical importance of the disappearance of this paradigm in determining US national security policy:

We no longer have the Soviet threat against which to measure our defense. It is hard to overestimate how completely the Soviet threat dominated our force structure, our strategy, our doctrine, even the design of our weapons. Now, it is gone. What do we need a defense for? For decades we had no reason to ask such fundamental questions about defense. The Soviet threat had supplied the answers. Now we are asking fundamental questions and are still shaping the overarching policy to guide the answers.<sup>35</sup>

The effects of this loss of paradigm profoundly influenced traditional US perspectives for evaluating local and regional conflicts.<sup>36</sup> During the Cold War, conflicts involving small states were played out against the backdrop of the ideological battlefield of the Cold War.<sup>37</sup> Such violence was defined along the primary cleavage dividing the United States and Soviet Union in which gains accomplished by one side were proportional to losses sustained by the other. The basic problem facing the United States was to maintain the political and territorial integrity of the non-communist parts of the world in the face of an expansionist power striving for global hegemony.<sup>38</sup> The outcome of small and regional conflicts, consequently, was defined by its effect on the geopolitical balance between the rival American and Soviet camps.<sup>39</sup>

Defining the new context in which today's conflicts occur is essential to determining their implications for the contemporary international system. Understanding the new context also poses the most fundamental challenge to the long-standing assumptions, strategies, and objectives contained in the US framework for devising policies to treat conflict in the international system. For this reason, the United States cannot escape basic revisions in the definition and promotion of its national security interests as it approaches the 21st century.

### **The American Experience with International Conflict**

#### **The Revolution Through World War II**

Makers of US national security policy who look for guidance based on the experience of the past will discover a dual American tradition: there are politically isolationist and anti-militarist elements as well as interventionist-militarist elements.<sup>40</sup> The former is the older and more dominant mood--tracing its origins to the American Revolution when the European system of balance of power politics, cynical diplomacy, and useless wars of greedy princes were denounced

by the Founding Fathers.<sup>41</sup> American adherence to this position should not be overdrawn, however. While the United States undoubtedly shied away from an actively interventionist role in international politics (especially European politics), it practiced policies in the 19th century which are better termed continentalism than isolationism. What came to be known as Manifest Destiny offered a suitable outlet for energies America may otherwise have devoted to foreign adventures.<sup>42</sup> Continentalism was based on the availability of a frontier to subjugate, and once that frontier closed in the late 19th century, America ventured into an international system of multiple great powers pursuing individual and competing interests.<sup>43</sup>

American attitudes toward international conflict molded during the period of continentalism remained salient through World War II. Put simply, never has so rich a domain been put together at so little cost. The original colonial territories were expanded many times over with minimal difficulties. Indeed, territorial expansion came so easily that it was not significantly dependent on military power.<sup>44</sup> Foreign opponents encountered in rounding out the continental domain--the Indian nations and Mexico--were defeated in an almost unbroken string of military successes that, when compared to the wars fought by the European great powers during this period, required only minor outlays of military power.<sup>45</sup> By the end of the 19th century, for example, the US Army had only 27,495 men (one person in 1,650 was in the army), and military spending was less than 0.5 percent of the gross national product. In 1910, after America had acquired overseas possessions, the US army had 79,000 men, compared with Germany's 615,000 and France's 607,000.<sup>46</sup>

Wars of territorial expansion against foreign opponents in the 19th century produced a uniquely American perspective on the role of international conflict in securing national interests. Military theorists including Carl von Clausewitz advance two maxims in understanding the dynamics of war. First, ends dictate means.<sup>47</sup> The political objectives sought in a war will determine the military means employed for those objectives. Second, the relationship between ends and means in war is proportional.<sup>48</sup> Political goals will not only specify the military objectives sought in a war, but also the amount of force they require.<sup>49</sup>

The rule of proportionality between ends and means when fighting wars against foreign opponents did not apply to the American experience in the 19th century, however.<sup>50</sup> A skewing of the balance occurred in that America achieved far-reaching political goals at relatively modest

costs.<sup>51</sup> The weakness of its opponent in the Spanish-American War, for example, allowed the United States to achieve its political objectives at little military cost, and the war left America an imperial power.<sup>52</sup> World Wars I & II were two more successes in the US record in the first half of the 20th century.<sup>53</sup> Despite fierce resistance by capable opponents, America emerged from both wars relatively unscathed. While other major parties to the fighting suffered devastating losses and required long recovery periods, America rose to a zenith of power and influence in international politics as a result of its participation.<sup>54</sup>

In addition, it is important to note that the Monroe Doctrine, supplemented by President Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary, became the lever for numerous military actions in Latin America around the turn of the century.<sup>55</sup> This policy created a precedent for America to become involved in the internal affairs of smaller nations, even in the absence of an immediate or direct threat to the United States.<sup>56</sup> The results created an expectation, which remained until the Vietnam War, that such interventions could be carried out successfully using a small number of troops with few casualties.<sup>57</sup>

### **Dubious Battles of the Cold War**

Because the nuclear threat made fighting a war with the USSR highly undesirable, America competed indirectly against its primary adversary after World War II by using military power against the latter's client states.<sup>58</sup> Based on its past success in international conflicts, Washington had given little thought to modifying its original political goals in war based on the expenditure of effort required to conduct it.<sup>59</sup> While initial political aims had been largely the sole determinant of the policies established to conduct and end previous wars, the expenditure of effort began to exceed the perceived value of the original political objectives in Korea and Vietnam when the enemy adopted attrition strategies intended to exploit fatigue in the stronger opponent.<sup>60</sup> Unaccustomed to confronting such circumstances in wars against smaller and weaker opponents, the United States greatly altered its initial political objectives in both wars.<sup>61</sup> In this sense, the rule of proportionality affected US behavior by forcing a constriction of political goals given the inordinate costs required by the initial objectives, and the foreboding prospects of even greater costs should these goals remain unaltered.<sup>62</sup>

American officials were forced to react as domestic opinion became the most powerful influence on US wartime goals since the War of 1812.<sup>63</sup> Both wars demonstrated that, regardless

of prior attitudes, the public will initially support the president in handling a crisis. However, sustained public support depends on the longer-run success of a president's policies. The erosion of support that characterized the Korean and Vietnam Wars is indicative of an enduring pattern of general public reaction to protracted and unsuccessful wars.

- In Korea, the political goal of uniting the peninsula through military force was abandoned. Acceptance of a draw in Korea, although not the preferred political outcome, was at least consistent with the larger goal of containing the growth of international communism.<sup>64</sup> The weakening of America's commitment to its initial political intentions paralleled the public's progressive disenchantment with US involvement in the war. For example, whereas 81 percent reported support for Truman's decision in 1950, two years later only 35 percent of the public reported that they favored Truman's original commitment of troops to Korea.<sup>65</sup> The lack of sustained and inexpensive progress in conducting the war diminished public support sufficiently that America was compelled to make important political concessions to its opponent for a settlement.
- The Vietnam War experience provided compelling evidence that the magnitude of US successes through World War II carried the seeds of disenchantment in more equivocal wars abroad after 1945. The public's growing disillusionment with the Vietnam War was clearly reflected in public opinion polls. In 1965, only 24 percent of the general public thought the United States made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam. In 1971, 61 percent felt a mistake was made.<sup>66</sup> Again, the unpopularity of the war was a significant factor in the progressive weakening of political terms America would accept to end the fighting.<sup>67</sup>
- The Vietnam War, moreover, seriously weakened domestic agreement on a key pillar of the Cold War consensus: that wars involving US forces against communist proxy states were an appropriate instrument of policy in the larger struggle with international communism. The Sino-Soviet split, US-Soviet detente, US-Chinese rapprochement, and the belief that both communist giants either were or could be enticed to support the status quo in international politics argued against the significance of Vietnam as a danger to world security. Attitudes of the American public again reflected this trend. In 1964, 29

percent of the American population named communism when asked about their national fears or worries. In 1972, only 8 percent mentioned fear of communism.<sup>68</sup>

### **Changing Fortunes of the Post-Cold War World**

At the opening of the post-Cold War period, both the international and domestic contexts that shaped American views on international conflict and its relationship to US national security changed fundamentally. Several of the agents of change had their origins in the latter portion of the Cold War, especially the emergence of a post-Vietnam "syndrome" in US attitudes on dealing with international conflict. The influence of these developments could only be fully realized, however, in a fresh appraisal of the assumptions, strategies, and objectives of US national security policy necessitated by the Cold War's end.

- The great power paradigm of international conflict in world affairs was dead. Moreover, the tendency for peripheral conflicts to acquire an East-West dimension in the Cold War period--the final historical setting for the great power paradigm of international conflict--had vanished. Hence, these conflicts possess little strategic importance for the structure and operation of the international system, and the political realignments produced by that violence have little impact on the global power balance.
- The view of war as an instrument of policy for achieving ambitious objectives with minimal levels of force and cost, a fixture of America's expectations for most of its history, had also disappeared. The frustrations and equivocalities of fighting in the Cold War period decayed military power as a policy option and undermined the tendency of the American public to support permissively the use of US armed forces in conflicts abroad. While force has not lost its utility altogether, the expectation that military gambits would proceed quickly, successfully, painlessly and garner ambitious political advantages no longer exists.<sup>69</sup>

Two indices that highlight the struggle to define US national security interests in international conflicts over the last decade--from the final phase of the Cold War through the current period--are the actual willingness of American decisionmakers to commit forces in conflicts abroad, and US public expressions of support for those decisions. The consequences of committing US military power in these conflicts also illustrate the varying paths fighting can take once the decision is made for US forces to engage in combat.

Interventions in Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1989 paralleled previous US interventions against small and disorganized countries in Latin America. These episodes indicated that force could still be used effectively and affirmed the self-evident proposition that people like success. Both actions were popular with the US public because they quickly proved successful, thereby demonstrating that fewer people oppose a policy once it proves to be successful than if its outcome is still uncertain. Mean public support for the Panama operation soared over 80 percent after its rapid conclusion, while over 60 percent approved of Grenada.<sup>70</sup>

The Persian Gulf reflagging case in 1987 and the Persian Gulf War in 1990-91 demonstrated that where US vital interests are defined as clearly threatened, the United States will act militarily. Both presented cases of a vital interest at stake--access to adequate amounts of oil at a reasonable price; an unambiguous threat to that interest--Iranian and Iraqi aggression that menaced the sea-lanes and the flow of oil; and, a battlefield and opponent that favored US weapons and tactics--open desert and Hussein's rigid deployment of troops in entrenched positions.<sup>71</sup> For these reasons, US policies in both instances received high levels of public support that was reinforced, especially in the Persian Gulf War, by the quick and successful use of military forces to achieve stipulated goals. Mean public support for the Reagan reflagging policy registered over 55 percent, while public approval of Desert Storm scored well over 80 percent.<sup>72</sup>

The inability of US decisionmakers to sort out the complexities of the "peacekeeping" mission in Lebanon in 1983, and the lack of discernable progress in achieving the ambiguous goal of remaking the warring internal factors into a viable government left the American public far less supportive of the dispatch of US Marines to Beirut.<sup>73</sup> Mean public support for the move was never higher than 45 percent.<sup>74</sup> Although public approval for the operation surged for a brief period after the death of 241 US Sailors and Marines because people hoped that a successful conclusion to the mission would justify the expenditure of these lives, the mood was short-lived. Support dropped precipitously. In fact, one of the main reasons the Reagan administration finally decided in early 1984 to withdraw the Marines from Beirut was concern that if the issue dragged on, it could severely damage the President's reelection prospects.<sup>75</sup>

Two conflicts--Somalia and Bosnia--are impossible to judge in terms of their individual significance and seminal value as guides to future US policies since they remain ongoing.

Because they are representative of the ethnic, nationalist, and religious conflicts that have erupted in the wake of the fall of the Soviet empire, the Warsaw Pact, and Moscow's controlling influence on client states in the Third World, some preliminary interpretations are appropriate.<sup>76</sup>

In Somalia, there is a glaring absence of strategic interests by any major power. As a consequence, President Bush's decision to send troops to Somalia in 1992 was generally accepted as a humanitarian act intended to stop the killing and starvation that had already claimed 300,000 lives.<sup>77</sup> Historically, there is little precedent for such purely humanitarian interventions.<sup>78</sup> The absence of US strategic interests in Somalia was offset by the belief that the delivery of relief supplies and partial pacification of cities and villages could be accomplished at close-to-zero cost in US lives within a very short period of time.<sup>79</sup>

The subsequent decision to withdraw US troops from Somalia in response to relatively minor, but highly publicized casualties, is indicative of the tenuousness of purpose and commitment which accompany military interventions that are not in response to overt threats to important interests, and that are not susceptible to quick and low-cost resolution. Public approval of US troops in Somalia dropped from 79 percent in January 1993 to 36 percent last October following the death of 18 US Rangers.<sup>80</sup> In addition, the most important US goal in Somalia, according to public opinion polling, changed from establishing a stable government there to bringing US troops home as soon as possible. The Somali experience suggests that striking a powerful moral chord in the United States may be enough to motivate Washington to dispatch troops to conflicts abroad, but by itself is inadequate to justify protracted commitments that are punctuated by unexpected sacrifices. The precipitous loss of public support may presage greater US reluctance to act in future situations given difficulties in mustering the requisite domestic support and uncertainties about accomplishing humanitarian goals on the cheap.<sup>81</sup>

In the United States, there is little unity of purpose or outlook in policy options involving Bosnia because of questions about whether conditions that will serve as the basis for military intervention can be satisfied beforehand.<sup>82</sup> Few Americans think the risk is worth taking, and polls show that 66 percent of the public oppose military intervention with ground troops.<sup>83</sup> Doubts over whether the United States has a national interest in the conflict, whether this interest is compatible with military action, whether operations can be undertaken with a reasonable chance of success, and whether public support for an interventionist policy can be generated and

sustained, all contribute to vacillations about a US position on Bosnia and characterizations of US policy as unhelpful for stopping the fighting.<sup>84</sup>

The use of air strikes by the United States and other Western nations to influence the conduct of fighting in Bosnia, and to coerce recalcitrant parties into accepting a settlement is a relatively novel application of US military power.<sup>85</sup> The appeal of such an action is obvious. It minimizes the risk the casualties, exploits US military superiority against weaker states, avoids prolonged involvement in any fighting, allows punishment to be administered discretely, maintains the option of additional attacks, permits subsequent applications of force to reflect the results of the initial strike, and displays US military power in dramatic fashion.<sup>86</sup> The effect of air strikes on the behavior of the participants in the Bosnian conflict has been mixed, but available evidence suggests that they have been successful in stopping the fighting in specific locations at least over the short term.<sup>87</sup>

The experiences of Lebanon and Somalia, coupled with the US preference to rely on air strikes in dealing with the situation in Bosnia, suggest strongly that casualty avoidance is now exercising a much greater influence on US leaders in their policy deliberations. The desire to minimize losses when using military actions to achieve political goals is self-evident, and in US wars with foreign opponents in the 19th century, the light casualties incurred contributed significantly to America's positive experience with war as an instrument of policy. Against weak foreign opponents, the magnitude of casualties did not intrude as a major factor in determining US wartime goals or military operations, but against determined and skillful opponents like those encountered in World War II, potentially staggering American casualties were a source of concern. The policy implications of this difference is a key factor in understanding the constraints on American leaders who confront contemporary international conflicts.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized the importance of preparing the American public for large-scale casualties in World War II, and he appreciated the discouraging effect sizable casualty lists could have on America's continuing support of the war effort.<sup>88</sup> His concern was heightened by the approach US forces would use in fighting the war. Following the model established by General Grant in the Civil War, the first object of US strategy would be the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. Implicit in this strategy of annihilation is the prospect that a war can be won as quickly and decisively as possible.<sup>89</sup> This strategy is accompanied by

the realization that a war of mass and concentration and direct confrontation with the enemy might produce great casualties as well. As the invasion of northern France approached--a move that would put US armies in an area closest to Germany's own heartland and where German resistance was sure to be strong--President Roosevelt used a speech delivered on 24 December 1943 to ready the American people for the losses that were sure to follow:

Soldiers know there are many bigger and costlier battles still to be fought . . . The war is now reaching the stage where we shall all have to look forward to large casualty lists--dead, wounded, and missing. War entails just that.<sup>90</sup>

Through such "fireside chats," Roosevelt consistently justified anticipated losses by linking them to the far-reaching goals the war was intended to deliver. In the same speech, he also talked about building "the kind of world which alone can justify all the sacrifices of this war." He went on to state:

I can say to you that at last we may look forward into the future with real and substantial confidence that, however great the cost, peace on Earth and good will toward men can be--and will be--realized and ensured.<sup>91</sup>

Roosevelt successfully maintained the public's support for the war because he was able to causally link the magnitude of casualties to the greatness of the victory achieved.<sup>92</sup> The war's intended outcome provided a political context that Roosevelt used to shape the public's consciousness regarding the permissibility of casualties sustained in its conduct. Far from being characterized as an unfortunate cost of winning the war, Roosevelt used casualty figures as an index to validate the selection of war goals and to measure the significance of their accomplishment.

The more equivocal American experiences with international conflicts since 1945, however, deprived US political leaders of the ability to juxtapose casualties with war aims so convincingly. Mounting casualties that superseded the political context in which they could be justified forced America to accept compromise settlements in Korea and Vietnam. John Mueller's study of these conflicts offered pioneering research into the relationship between public support and casualty levels in US wars. Mueller calculated a strikingly precise logarithmic relationship in which public support in Korea and Vietnam declined by 15 percent as casualties mounted from 100 to 1,000, and then another 15 percent as casualties mounted from 1,000 to 10,000.<sup>93</sup> No strict conclusions about public support for US wartime policies can be drawn based on this relationship alone. In World War II, US casualties were almost four times as high as in Vietnam, but public

support remained high. The context that justified the World War II casualties, however, was missing in Vietnam. While President Roosevelt could offer sustained progress in conducting the war and a visionary peace, President Johnson could only offer more desultory fighting for an indefinite period with little hope of eventual success.<sup>94</sup>

None of America's conflicts since Vietnam reached Mueller's casualty scales, so testing his findings with more recent data is impossible. Significant decreases in public support for US policies in Lebanon and Somalia following American military casualties strongly suggest, however, that the influence of this relationship has increased in contemporary US public opinion. The circumstances under which American forces departed Lebanon and Somalia indicate that loss of public support clearly influenced US officials in their decision to terminate American involvement in these conflicts. These examples illustrate the discontinuities in policy that result when ambiguities surround the objectives being sought through force of arms, and the equivocalities of commitment when objectives are not achieved easily and their value is superseded by costs incurred along the way.

#### **Future Trends of International Conflict**

An abundance of literature has appeared in recent years that proposes the concept of "complex interdependence" as an organizing theme for understanding behavioral dynamics of the post-Cold War world.<sup>95</sup> Some authors argue that interstate conflict within this new international environment has become extremely unlikely because its costs have greatly increased, the gains it could bring have decreased--especially when compared to alternative routes to these goals--and the values states seek in global politics have altered.<sup>96</sup>

There is nothing particularly new about the contention that war has ceased to be a productive instrument of state policy in international relations, or that the growing interdependence of states is one of the primary reasons for this development.<sup>97</sup> One proponent of the "war-is-dead" argument, Klaus Knorr, offered in the mid-1960s that the utility of force had diminished in world affairs. Writing in 1977, however, Knorr acknowledged that he was no longer as sure of his position and concluded, "The historical record does not support, or even suggest, the assumption that growing interdependence discourages the generation of divisive vital issues or breeds a dependable aversion to violence."<sup>98</sup> By the early 1980s, Werner Levi repeated in his study of conflictual behavior among states the argument that war is outmoded because of the

internationalization of national interests and the overall changes that have taken place in the international system. He asserted that the "expanding domestic interests of states with the corollary expansion of their internationalization has, in general, a pacifying influence upon relations between states."<sup>99</sup>

While the recent work of contemporary authors demonstrates the continuing popularity of this line of thinking in the post-Cold War world, the hypothesis has not received solid empirical confirmation. For example, according to a report of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, over 100 major conflicts around the world left some 20 million dead between 1945 and 1992.<sup>100</sup> What is most interesting about these figures is that they were accrued in the absence of great power military conflicts and relatively few instances of direct and extensive great power participation in local conflicts. Nevertheless, the level of violence during this period, as judged by the number of conflicts and their casualties, does not indicate that international conflict is outmoded in the current world political system.

Much of the validity of the argument that war has ceased to be a rational instrument of state policy rests on conjecture about the resilience of global stability, patterns of change in future international politics, and the dominant forms of interaction that will typify state behavior. Not surprisingly, there is considerable uncertainty and some disagreement over these issues. Models of a post-Cold War international system typically are based on a multipolar power system, and they reflect the belief that such an arrangement is desirable because it will reduce the occurrence of conflict in world affairs relative to the experience of the Cold War bipolar period.<sup>101</sup> The argument is based on three propositions. First, multipolarity affords a greater number of interactive opportunities and a variety of partners to reduce the danger of rising antagonisms between two states. Second, multipolarity diminishes the attention a state will pay to any other state, thereby decreasing the number of national actions that will reach the threshold of international significance and lead to conflicts. Third, multipolarity has a dampening effect on arms races because increases in weapons holdings to offset the advantages of other states should be less than if there were only two opposed powers.<sup>102</sup>

Although multipolarity offers remedies for certain disadvantages in the bipolar system, it also has particular deficiencies in terms of preventing international conflict.<sup>103</sup> First, a bipolar system can have but one antagonist, while multipolarity can have an infinite number of frictions. Since

in a multipolar world a great number of states will be significant actors in the system, a large range of claims and interests must ensue. The greater the gamut of demands, the harder it is to accommodate them. Thus, multipolarity, by increasing diversity, may also increase conflicts of interest. Second, in a multipolar world, a single change in structural alignment may not be decisive for the system as a whole, but its consequences are far more difficult to calculate. By contrast, change in a bipolar world is relatively easy to calculate because its significance is measured against only two poles of power that represent the entire system. Since multipolarity increases the reverberations of change, the system finds it more difficult to absorb it and resume stability.

Because of concerns about underlying strains in a multipolar system and disagreements over whether they give rise to stresses that generate conflict, projections of a more peaceful international environment based solely on this structure in international politics and the specific forms of interaction that characterize it must be viewed warily. Forecasts of trends in international conflict into the 21st century should avoid defining enduring change based only on recent transformations. An estimate of future behavior requires a perspective that sees beyond the detours taken in the fleeting present. Behind and beyond each incident in international politics stands a longer past and a longer future, and only by adopting a comprehensive perspective can studies move toward real understanding of the dynamics of conflict in global affairs.

The following judgments assess in broad terms the future makeup of international conflict in world affairs. They are intended to summarize the boundaries and content of longer-term developments in international relations, and to estimate the changing character of conflict in the future global system by identifying key variables that will determine its frequency and pattern. These views offer a sufficiently different picture of future conflict to both question the traditional relationship of US national security interests to world violence, and to influence the parameters of US policies adopted to secure those interests.

First, armed conflicts among the major powers will not occur.<sup>104</sup> Although such conflicts did not happen during the Cold War, the potential for a great power confrontation remained a fundamental influence on the structure and operation of international politics as well as the national security policies of the two primary antagonists--America and the Soviet Union. Now,

that influence is gone, and no similarly dominant paradigm of international conflict will fill the strategic void for the foreseeable future.

Second, local conflicts almost certainly will remain present, but they will not possess the significance they once did for affecting the structure and operation of the international system. Virtually all of the world's 30 or so ongoing conflicts are in less developed states, and about half of these are in Africa. None of these conflicts have demonstrated the potential to escalate into major conflagrations through great power intervention in the fighting--a primary concern during the Cold War. The lack of great power willingness to participate in the fighting to achieve a certain outcome is indicative of the conflicts' lesser importance in jeopardizing the integrity of the international system's geostrategic balance of power.

Third, virtually all of the local conflicts that do take place will involve fighting over the domestic political authority structure of the smaller states in which they occur. Civil war will remain the dominant form of violence in the world, as domestic factions seek to seize power in the vacuum created by the fall of the Soviet Union and the dissipation of its controlling influence in other areas. Most of these conflicts will eventually be resolved either through a settlement reached among the contending parties or the accrual of preponderant strength by one of its participants. In some cases, domestic fighting may not cease altogether, but lessen sufficiently so that authorities are able to manage the violence to ensure that it does not threaten the rule of the government. As these conflicts are resolved, other instances of civil strife may rise to take their place, and Africa appears to be a good candidate to supply most of the world's civil wars for the foreseeable future.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, the conflicts will remain marginal events in the larger sweep of global politics because their outcomes will have little individual significance for the international system as a whole.

Fourth, conflicts caused by overt foreign military aggression will cease to be a primary instigator of fighting between nations. While the Persian Gulf War demonstrated that armed conflict for this reason has not been eliminated in international politics, most states, including all the major powers, believe that they can benefit more by trading with other countries than by conquering them.<sup>106</sup> As noted, a high level of economic interdependence has not prevented armed conflicts, but it does reinforce the belief that a state's economic well-being is linked to that of other states in the system.<sup>107</sup> While territorial disputes remain a cause of friction in certain

regions, existing borders have remained generally resilient throughout most of the world since 1945, and it remains unlikely that a desire to rectify border grievances will emerge in the future as a major reason for states to resort to armed conflict against contiguous neighbors.

Fifth, the interest of major powers in local conflicts and the potential for their participation in the fighting will be significantly lower than in the past when the great power paradigm operated as a determining influence in patterns of international conflict. The lack of a meaningful stake in the outcome of the fighting, coupled with a heightened aversion to risking casualties in such conflicts, will place unprecedented constraints on the great powers in intervening militarily in the fighting. While diplomatic and other offers of peaceful assistance to terminate the fighting may be used, the disintegrative processes created by these conflicts will not require the imposition of a great power military solution because the violence will not threaten the resiliency of the international system and will not pose a serious challenge to the overarching goal of the major powers to maintain systemic stability by managing contending pressures caused by global change.

Based on these broad outlines of projected characteristics of conflict in the international system, what conclusions can be drawn about the importance of this violence for the structure and operation of future global politics? The following general propositions appear plausible:

- Armed conflict will remain a feature of the "new world order," but the number of truly international conflicts will decrease as civil wars and other forms of internal fighting become the most prevalent types of violence in world affairs.
- Local conflicts in the world may persist for considerable periods, given the intractable nature of competing political interests vying for power and the low-intensity fighting that typically accompanies domestic insurgencies.
- Levels of violence in global politics will become less intense, however, given the limited military capabilities of contesting domestic factions in smaller countries, and the desire of contiguous neighbors to stay out of civil wars.
- The current period of adjustment in international politics within which many ongoing conflicts have arisen will eventually end as various methods are used to restore order, and new domestic political authority structures are created to fill the vacuum created by the end of the Cold War.

- The significance of local violence in the international system will be marginal because the fighting is intended to affect domestic governmental authority and, unlike conflicts involving the major powers, is not directed at affecting the structure or operation of global politics.
- The probability that small conflicts will escalate because of great power interests and participation in the fighting is almost nil.
- Conflicts will still prove disruptive to the normal patterns of behavior in regions where the fighting is occurring, but the likelihood that war will produce systemic catastrophe for world affairs is virtually zero.

Military conflict in international politics, under these circumstances, becomes less of a threat to the stability of the international system and also becomes easier to manage from the perspective of containing the spread of violence.<sup>108</sup> Reactions of the major powers to local conflicts typically will range from benign neglect to offers of peaceful assistance to terminate the fighting. A militarized response, previously the great powers' first choice to handle local conflicts, will be selected seldomly, if at all, in the future. Such a fundamentally different international environment has serious implications for the objectives of US national security policy and the actions taken to achieve them.

### **US National Security into the 21st Century**

Many authors writing about US national security in the post-Cold War era accept the notion that the end of the US-USSR bipolar confrontation necessitates a "starting from zero" reappraisal of existing policies.<sup>109</sup> There is very little sentiment expressed for a US withdrawal from its world leadership position, and no responsible voice calls for a return to the isolationist tendencies that marked US foreign policy in the period between World Wars I & II. Despite this consensus, changes in patterns of conflict in international relations that are projected to emerge in the "new world order" do commend a serious examination of the framework within which US national security decisions are made. No where will this appraisal be more profoundly felt than in the use of the US military as an instrument of policy in treating conflict in the international system.

"The Bottom-Up Review" completed by the Department of Defense (DoD) in late 1993 provided a proposed outline for determining US force requirements in the new era.<sup>110</sup> The positions contained in the "Review" were replicated in the 1994 "Annual Report to the President

and the Congress" submitted by the Secretary of Defense.<sup>111</sup> Both documents contain several serious estimative inconsistencies when compared to current and projected patterns of armed conflict that are likely to exist in world politics. The major incongruities contained in the reports include the types of conflict that are likely to dominate international relations, the number of conflicts America should be prepared to fight simultaneously, US military objectives in these wars, the place of non-combat missions in US force requirements, and the interests that should undergird US participation in any fighting.

The reports contain an exaggerated focus on military aggression for territorial conquest as a model for future conflictual behavior among states.<sup>112</sup> The selection of a military aggression model in these reports is based, not surprisingly, on the Persian Gulf War, which is then used as a primary determinant for future US force requirements.<sup>113</sup> A study of conflict patterns since the end of the Cold War, however, does not empirically support the position that the Persian Gulf War is sufficiently representative of future trends in international conflict--either in terms of probability or frequency of occurrence--to justify its selection as a template to project US force requirements. Empirical trends show that the Persian Gulf War was an anomaly in international conflict, and that it is not representative of types of armed conflict that are likely to occur now or in the future. For example, a study conducted last year discovered 48 cases of ethnic violence within states in the international system, but not one case of a war between states based on overt military aggression for territorial acquisition.<sup>114</sup>

The Persian Gulf War does demonstrate, nevertheless, that conflicts based on overt military aggression against states in the international system in which the United States has a vital interest are still possible and cannot be dismissed altogether. The oft-cited example of North Korean aggression against South Korea is used in the DoD reports as a scenario to illustrate the need for the United States to intervene militarily outside the Middle East. The Middle East and Korean examples, however, exhaust the population of plausible examples that can be currently cited to support this scenario. In contrast, the prospect is raised repeatedly that Moscow's desire to establish a slightly smaller version of the former Soviet Union by intervening militarily against other former Soviet republics in the "near-abroad" will be a likely source of conflict in the foreseeable future.<sup>115</sup> However disruptive such a move would be to Russia's bilateral relations with the United States, Washington would not intervene militarily because of a lack of palpable

vital interests, and its concerns over the escalation in fighting that would result from a commitment of US forces.<sup>116</sup> Contemporary and future trends of conflict in world affairs indicate that a scenario based on overt military regional aggression that imperils US vital interests should be regarded as a "lesser-included" scenario in which to assess the capability requirements of US forces.

A second questionable contention contained in both the "Review" and "Annual Report" is the assertion that the United States must be prepared for "two major regional conflicts occurring nearly simultaneously" as a basic national security planning requirement.<sup>117</sup> The reasonableness of this threat is based on the proposition that a regional opponent would, acting opportunistically, attack a US ally while America was already fighting in a different region of the world. Postulating this threat as valid for use as a measure for US force requirements has two flaws. First, since the end of World War II, the United States has not been required to engage in more than a single major regional conflict at one time that involved the commitment of sizable military forces to defeat foreign military aggression against an allied country. Second, when the United States has been committed militarily in a major regional conflict, opponents in other regions have not seized the opportunity for quick gain by commencing campaigns for territorial acquisition against countries allied with the United States.<sup>118</sup>

A separate argument could be made that the additional forces are required to deter a second opponent who, otherwise, would exploit the vulnerability created by America's diverted attention.<sup>119</sup> Force requirements associated with deterring a second regional conflict, however, are substantially different than those required to "fight and win" that conflict. In simple terms, deterrence succeeds when an opponent keeps from moving because he is convinced that the risk of negative payoffs from aggression exceeds the potential positive payoffs he could accrue from acting. Convincing an opponent that the likely negative payoffs from aggression are higher than the probable positive payoffs, as studies of the theory of deterrence show, is not based on the capability to defeat militarily the opponent by maintaining superior combat forces.<sup>120</sup> That is defense, which is the ability to physically deny an opponent any gain from aggression. Deterrence is intended to make the opponent believe that the potential costs of acting are greater than the potential gains.<sup>121</sup> Planning calculations based on this less ambitious military

requirement should result in considerable force savings compared to levels projected as required in the DoD reports.<sup>122</sup>

Although the threat of "two major regional conflicts" is described as "plausible" in the DoD reports, it lacks pertinence as a key criterion in evaluating US national security requirements. It more properly reflects a "worst-case" approach to defining potential threats that has in the past acted as a dysfunctional planning tool because it resulted in exaggerated estimates of US national security requirements.<sup>123</sup> A more germane scenario can be developed by multiplying the low probability of the threat of two major regional conflicts by the low probability of the threat of military aggression for territorial conquest as an instigator of conflict, and then multiplying the outcome by the low probability of the United States having sufficient interests in the conflict to participate in the fighting. For planning purposes, US forces capable of fighting in one major regional conflict resulting from military aggression by a state against another for territorial conquest emerges as a prudent guideline for measuring future requirements for US military power.<sup>124</sup>

The influence of historical US experiences in war-fighting is evident in the DoD reports' identification of "decisively defeating the enemy" as a primary goal of US combat operations.<sup>125</sup> While this goal guided US military policy in the past, evidence compiled since World War II strongly suggests that it will not typify US war termination objectives in future international conflicts. The exceptions to this rule are in operations against weak states--such as Grenada--when decisive defeat of the enemy can be accomplished at close-to-zero cost, and where US vital interests are directly threatened by overt foreign military aggression--as in the Persian Gulf case.

In peripheral conflicts where the United States faces a determined opponent, or where the conflict's outcome does not affect its vital interests, the enhanced US aversion to sizable casualties will make decisive defeat of the enemy an undesirable or unnecessary goal in planning military operations. While complete victory remains a possible objective, there is a greater probability that more modest war-termination objectives will satisfy US national security interests in those cases where the US intervenes militarily in a peripheral conflict. Such goals may include a forcible restoration of the *status quo ante* or a cease-fire that permits a negotiated settlement of the dispute. These outcomes do not require the far-reaching military requirement

to decisively defeat the enemy, nor do they justify the casualty-producing strategy implied in such military operations. To secure its national security interests in future international conflicts, the "fight and negotiate" criterion of Korea and Vietnam will be employed considerably more frequently by the United States than the "fight and win" rule of World War II fame postulated in the "Review" and "Annual Report."

Both DoD reports discuss the role of peace operations for US military forces.<sup>126</sup> Although definitional problems plague an examination of this mission, such operations typically are divided into two primary components--peacekeeping and peace-enforcement. The former involves monitoring and enforcing a cease-fire agreed to by two or more former combatants. It proceeds in an atmosphere where peace exists and where former combatants nominally prefer peace to continued war. Peace-enforcement entails physical interposition of armed forces to separate ongoing combatants and create a cease-fire that does not exist. This mission receives the most attention in the DoD reports because it poses the greater challenge for US forces. Peacekeeping, however, has been carried out far more frequently in peace operation missions.<sup>127</sup>

Questions regarding the circumstances under which America would participate in peace operations have prompted considerable discussion within the United States in recent years.<sup>128</sup> The current US commitment to these operations, usually as part of a multinational effort under UN auspices, is relatively limited when measured numerically. US forces provide only 6 percent of over 70,000 UN personnel deployed worldwide.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, forces in the largest US commitment--the UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia--have been withdrawn. Conversely, some 600 US troops are slated to go to Haiti should UN peacekeepers ever deploy there, and thousands of American troops could be fielded as part of a UN peacekeeping force in Bosnia.<sup>130</sup>

The focus on peace operations in US national security deliberations is largely attributable to the fact that it is currently the only game in town for American forces. The lack of ongoing or imminent alternative missions for the US military promotes peace operations as the single mission with enough immediacy and relevance to warrant the close scrutiny it has received on a continuing basis in public debates.<sup>131</sup> Part of the debate is also generated by the fact that this mission is relatively uncommon for US forces and has only recently become known to the American public. It is not unprecedented, however. In the 19th century, the US Cavalry served what now resembles a peacekeeping/peace-enforcement role by placing itself between US and

Indian territories in an effort to prevent white encroachment on Indian lands that were guaranteed in various treaties.<sup>132</sup>

Peace operations reflect scant resemblance to the other types of missions assigned to US forces in the "Bottom-Up Review." They rarely, if ever, involve US vital interests, and the mission falls outside traditional criteria in the US national security framework that establish roles and capabilities for US military power. From a military perspective, they are often dreary affairs, far removed from the traditional goals of seizing the enemy, controlling his land and population, and winning decisively on the battlefield. Moreover, the problem peace operations now usually confront--maintaining peace among fractious domestic sides seeking control over political authority structures in small, disorganized states--usually requires the skills of a diplomat more than a warrior.<sup>133</sup> Yet, this role for US forces is more consistent with the types of conflict that occur in today's world and that are expected to continue in the future. At the end of 1993, for example, there were 17 ongoing UN peace operations, and the United States was participating in five of those missions.<sup>134</sup> Despite the relatively low level of US participation in UN peace operations thus far, they appear to be the most likely task to require US military participation on an ongoing basis in the post-Cold War world.

The place of peace operations in the overall US national security agenda remains clouded, nevertheless, and ambiguities that surround the benefits derived for US interests from participation in such undertakings illustrate the conundrum US leaders face. For example, UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright stated in late 1993 that peace operations do not relate to the protection of US vital interests:

I would hope we would all agree that, although multilateral peacekeeping is a potentially valuable foreign policy tool, it cannot serve as a guarantor of our own vital interests, nor should it lessen our resolve to maintain vigorous regional alliances and a strong national defense. We want a stronger UN, but we are not about to substitute elusive notions of global collective security for battle-proven and time-tested concepts of unilateral and allied defense.<sup>135</sup>

At the same time, she did provide an alternative justification for US participation in peace operations that reflects a more indirect approach to the definition of US national security interests in global politics:

Territorial disputes, armed ethnic conflicts, civil wars, and the total collapse of governmental authority in some states are now among the principal threats to international peace and stability. Although many of these conflicts may not

impinge directly on the national security interests of America or its allies, the cumulative effect of continuing conflict include economic dislocation, humanitarian disaster, terrorism and other forms of international lawlessness, regional political instability and the rise of leaders and societies that do not share our values. These problems can and do affect us and concern us.<sup>136</sup>

Former Defense Secretary Les Aspin offered a similar explanation of the influence that regional conflicts have on US national security policy:

These (regional) conflicts, while not posing direct threats to vital US interests, may nonetheless jeopardize important American interests in regional security and in democracy and human rights. The cumulative impact of unchecked conflict and its ensuing human and economic costs will render more elusive the Administration's goal of enlarging the sphere of democratic, free-market states.<sup>137</sup>

Because many of these threats may not "impinge directly" on US interests, it is difficult to assess precisely their significance in promoting US national security. The case for these conflicts threatening international stability, however, is hard to justify or to reconcile with what constitutes "important" US interests. There is no empirical basis to support the claim that the problems described by Ambassador Albright threaten the stability of the international system. Available evidence shows that the system demonstrates considerable resilience in absorbing ongoing conflicts--even on an extensive scale in countries where they are occurring--without suffering seriously disruptive effects in its operation. If, however, these events are "principal threats" to international stability, as Ambassador Albright claims, then it is hard to understand why they should not be considered direct threats to the national security interests of America. As a status quo power, systemic stability in international relations is by definition of the highest importance to US interests.

The current uncertainty about the importance of peace operations in ongoing US national security deliberations is reflective of the tentativeness with which America will probably approach this mission for the foreseeable future. The dispiriting experience in Somalia and the risks associated with intervention in Bosnia have dampened whatever enthusiasm originally attended US participation in UN peace operations in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. A long-awaited US policy on peacekeeping and peace-enforcement, for example, reportedly will set high thresholds for the use of US troops in these missions. Indeed, the policy allegedly is in part intended to erase the notion that peace operations are a central feature of US foreign policy rather than simply a tool of it.<sup>138</sup> In addition, Senator Robert Dole (R-Kan) has introduced

a bill entitled the "Peace Powers Act of 1994," which is designed to place limitations on US participation in UN peace operations, and to ensure a Congressional role in any decision to dispatch US troops to UN missions abroad.<sup>139</sup> Despite these strictures, the potential for future troop involvement in this role is sufficiently great that the United States should maintain forces that are able to simultaneously conduct sizable peace operations and fight one major regional conflict.

Looking again at the arguments advanced by Ambassador Albright and former Secretary Aspin regarding US military responses to regional conflicts in the international system, they evince a line of thinking that is disturbingly reminiscent of the rationale that was used to support US intervention in Vietnam some 30 years ago. A plea to intervene in a particular contemporary regional conflict in order to contain the "cumulative" effect of growing violence parallels strongly the argument used to send US troops to Vietnam to contain the "spread" of international communism. The motivation for the United States to act in each of these cases does not come from the significance of the individual conflict, but from a larger political goal that is perceived to be at risk if the conflict goes unchecked. As noted, what made the war in Vietnam critical for the United States was not the expansionism of North Vietnam, but the containment of the threat posed by the spread of international communism. Likewise, Ambassador Albright and former Secretary Aspin argue that what makes a regional conflict critical for the United States is not the significance of the conflict itself, but the containment of the threat posed by the spread of international conflict.

Vietnam clearly demonstrated, however, that military actions which are justified by the context within which an event occurs, and not by the individual importance of the event itself, will not be sustainable over an extended period of time. Moreover, the argument that regional conflicts which go unchecked will have a cumulatively adverse impact on US interests worldwide suffers from the same errors that ultimately derailed the argument that if communism in Vietnam went unchecked it would spread throughout all of Southeast Asia and be detrimental to US interests globally. Just as the spread of communism was not found to be inexorable after South Vietnam fell, empirically-based patterns of armed conflict in international politics demonstrate that violence does not expand unceasingly when it is present in the world. Historical studies of international conflict show that while "some level of such violence is almost always present, there

are distinct and periodic fluctuations in the amount of violence."<sup>140</sup> Other studies of warlike behavior in international politics also demonstrate that periodicity exists in patterns of violence in global affairs.<sup>141</sup>

The argument put forth by the UN Ambassador and the former Defense Secretary should, therefore, be rejected as empirically unsound and distressingly replicative of policies that were repudiated in a war whose lessons are apparently now forgotten by those charged with devising a new national security policy for the United States. Guidelines for US military intervention in a local conflict should be clearly linked to immediate American interests at stake in the conflict, and not to amorphous concerns about a vague and distant threat the fighting poses to the future stability of the international system. Historical, current, and projected patterns of international conflict indicate that systemic effects are likely to be negligible in the absence of great power intervention in the fighting.

One additional observation about the definition of US military requirements in the "Review" and "Annual Report" is important. Although not treated in depth by either document, a role in which US forces may participate more actively in the future is the "strike-and-run" air operations in Bosnia. This technique appears ideally suited for a US national security policy that attempts to maintain the credibility of US power to coerce wayward states into observing standards of conduct in international relations, while at the same time avoiding protracted military involvement in peripheral conflicts where US vital interests are not at stake and domestic support is impossible to sustain for prolonged periods. Anticipated technological advances in US military systems will also make these operations even more effective with reduced risks.<sup>142</sup> If there is one future combat mission that appears well suited for American forces as an instrument of US national security policy, it is the "strike and run" operation.<sup>143</sup>

### Conclusions

The distinguishing characteristics of patterns of armed conflict that now dominate international relations and that are projected to exist into the 21st century have major implications for global politics and US national security policy. In terms of committing its military forces to combat in armed conflicts overseas to secure vital national interests, the United States faces its most benign international environment since the period between the end of World War I and the rise of fascism in the 1930s. No direct military threat jeopardizes the United States, and the

probability of a global conflict is virtually zero. The likelihood that regional conflicts will require US participation in the fighting to secure vital national interests is very low.

The DoD's "Annual Report" states, "In the future, there are likely to be many occasions when we are asked to intervene with military forces overseas."<sup>144</sup> That may be true. But it is also true that, from the perspective of its vital national interests, the United States will be able to respond "No." on virtually all of these occasions. Only rarely will national interests be sufficiently at stake in international conflicts that the United States will be obliged to secure its aims through force. Ironically, however, one of the most worrisome threats to America's observance of its greatly diminished requirement to use armed forces in combat abroad is its own inability to abandon policy paradigms that are no longer relevant in the post-Cold War world.<sup>145</sup> Until America recognizes that the security problems facing it now and into the 21st century are not military in their origin or solution, it will continue to run a sizable risk of visualizing threats to national interests where none exist, choosing inappropriate military answers to contemporary political problems, and becoming entangled in conflicts that it would better avoid.

This is not to suggest that the future international system will be trouble free. America will face numerous challenges, primarily economic, that it will be hard put to surmount. In addition, armed conflict of the type that is now prevalent in global politics will continue. It would be a mistake to dismiss these conflicts out of hand, but to exaggerate their importance to US national interests would also be wrong.<sup>146</sup> None is likely to pose a threat to US vital interests or to jeopardize the effective functioning of the international system, and most probably will end as the political authority vacuum created by the fall of empires is eliminated.<sup>147</sup> Attempts by the United States to impose a peace treaty or cease-fire agreement through force of arms almost certainly will prove ineffective and could be counterproductive. A study of 20th century conflicts shows that while large-scale international wars almost always end in peace treaties or cease-fire agreements, civil and revolutionary wars rarely do.<sup>148</sup> The fighting fades out when one side prevails.

In some states, internal violence may persist as a manifestation of weak domestic political authority, especially in Africa. As noted, such conflicts probably will dominate patterns of international conflict into the 21st century. Civil wars in small, impoverished states that lack robust political structures have occurred routinely since the end of colonization in the 1960s, and

based on this empirical record, none offer a serious threat to US vital interests when measured individually or collectively. US military intrusion to forcibly stop such fighting or to promote the victory of one side in the dispute ignores previous American experience in Vietnam that remains a valid guide for policy. In 1966, Senator Frank Church (D-Ind) raised broader questions about America's involvement in Vietnam that are relevant in considering the role of the Armed Forces today:

The question that I think faces this country is how we can best cope with the likelihood of revolt in the underdeveloped world in the years ahead, and I have very serious doubts that American military intervention will often be the proper decision.<sup>149</sup>

Church's warning is still relevant in reminding us of the adverse effects to US national interests American military power can have when it is used improperly or unwisely.

It is, of course, possible to conjure up future crises that could confront the United States with a grave threat to its interests, perhaps even to its survival. Although they lack a solid empirical foundation, this planning can be justified as prudent since international conditions could change to the detriment of US interests. Such scenarios, however, form a tenuous foundation for US national security planning. The utility of force as an element in great power relations has almost vanished. Its value for the great powers as an instrument in dealing with lesser powers has declined dramatically. Current and projected trends in international conflict do not show that force has lost its usefulness, but they do reveal that the necessity and productivity of resorting to force have diminished significantly. To ignore these events in designing military forces, or to build forces for wars that are judged highly unlikely by empirical and deductive measures, would not only be shortsighted, but wrongheaded. Alternatively, fielding a force prepared to secure US interests in the current and future international environment will avoid a potentially disastrous disconnect between American national security requirements and its military planning and power.

A significant constraint on US military adventures abroad will be the lack of domestic consensus in support of such actions. Evidence on US military actions overseas compiled since the end of the Cold War indicates that the American public will not provide sustained approval for protracted military interventions in situations where US vital interests are not clearly at stake. Although the prospect of a quick or painless US military stroke may offset an absence of vital

interest, any president will have to weigh such a move against the realization that support will be highly perishable if things go wrong. Moreover, if America does join the fighting in a peripheral conflict, the risk aversion strategy it almost certainly will employ to minimize casualties will reduce the intensity and length of its involvement in combat.

Washington's decision to remove forces from Somalia is indicative of a belief that the United States can unilaterally withdraw from a conflict in which it has no vital interests without doing any permanent damage to its international reputation. This implies a rejection of the Vietnam-era argument that, once committed, US forces must remain in a conflict for symbolic reasons once all practical military and political purposes for their continued presence have been exhausted. It also suggests an asymmetrical relationship should exist between America's willingness to join in, and then remain in, a peripheral conflict. The United States should use high thresholds in deciding whether to engage in such a conflict, but employ low thresholds in deciding whether to disengage.

This has left America in a paradoxical situation. It possesses the capability to apply military power to a greater extent than any other state in the international system; yet, an enduring, comprehensive, and viable political context within which to do so no longer exists. The result is a US national security framework that remains in disarray as it transitions from an approach in which force of arms was commonly conceived as effective in obtaining political objectives, to one in which the resort to combat will be rarely considered as a desirable or necessary way for the United States to achieve its political ends in the global system. Accepting the new international environment and its implications for US national security requires that fundamental changes be made in American defense policies that go well beyond those envisioned in current military planning. If, however, the new world order is ignored and policies are based on paradigms that are no longer relevant, then Washington's leadership in the world will be undermined and America will cheapen its own rewards in a new global system that it did so much to create.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This development has been acknowledged by numerous authors in their assessments of post-Cold War tenets of international relations. See, for example, Richard Rosecrance, "A New Concert of Powers," *Foreign Affairs* 71 (Spring 1992), pp. 64-82.

<sup>2</sup> Studies of conflict in the international system must contend with definitional difficulties surrounding major concepts such as war and power. The use of amorphous concepts to describe complex behaviors remains necessary if we are to move beyond definitional issues and develop analytic techniques for coping with the problems associated with the interaction of nations. Such ambiguity can prove advantageous in the sense that it encourages the introduction of new and imaginative ideas in the study of conflict. At the same time, this ambiguity also produces serious problems because it means that generalizations about conflict are always difficult to evaluate.

<sup>3</sup> For example, nuclear war is not examined in this study because it is not a prevalent form of armed conflict in the international system, nor is it projected to become so during the time frame used in this study. Civil war is treated as a generic type of conflict, but the various forms it can take are not treated individually. Moreover, international terrorism, while a serious problem in global politics, is not analyzed because it falls outside the definition of armed conflict used in this study. The term war, which is typically a subset of armed conflict, is used interchangeably with the term conflict in the analysis for the sake of simplicity. Armed conflict is defined as "hostilities between states or within a state or territory undertaken by means of armed force between or among organized groups." This definition is taken from, Jack C. Plano and Roy Olton, *The International Relations Dictionary* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1969), p. 77. For a discussion of definitional problems associated with the study of armed conflict in international relations, see, Sydney D. Bailey, *How Wars End* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 17-48.

<sup>4</sup> A discussion of the changing nature of international relations with emphasis on the differences between the Cold War and post-Cold War periods is contained in, Robert Jervis, "The Future of World Politics: Will it Resemble the Past?" *International Security* 16 (Winter 1991/92), pp. 39-73.

<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of emerging conflicts in the international system, see, Anthony D. Smith, "The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism," *Survival* 35 (Spring 1993), pp. 48-62.

<sup>6</sup> The need for a comprehensive approach in studying the international system should be unquestioned. Only an approach that is methodologically sound, systematic in its scope, and empirically based in its analysis can discover the principal variables that explain international relations and reveal the characteristic types of behavior among states. See, Stanley Hoffman, "Theory and International Relations," in Stanley Hoffman, ed. *The State of War* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965), pp. 3-21.

<sup>7</sup> Leo Gross, "The Peace of Westphalia, 1648-1948," *American Journal of International Law* 42 (January 1948), pp. 28-29.

<sup>8</sup> Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 739.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 220-248.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> For the purposes of this study, the structure of the international system is defined as the distribution of power among the states that constitute the system. The operation of the international system is defined as the standards of conduct that regulate the behavior of states in their dealings with each other.

<sup>12</sup> The definitive study of the Napoleonic Wars is, David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1966).

<sup>13</sup> A brief discussion of the effects of the Napoleonic Wars on the international system can be found in, Richard N. Rosecrance, *International Relations: Peace or War?* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), pp. 29-30.

<sup>14</sup> On the Concert of Europe, see, Richard N. Rosecrance, *Action and Reaction in World Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963).

<sup>15</sup> For a useful discussion of the relationship between the idea of collective security and the assumptions of the balance of power system, see, Inis L. Claude, *Swords into Plowshares* (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 255-260.

<sup>16</sup> A second attempt at collective security was the creation of the League of Nations following World War I. See, A.E. Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law, 1918-1935* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1969). The third attempt was the creation of the United Nations after World War II. See, Leon Gordenker, ed. *The United Nations in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), especially Chapter 4.

<sup>17</sup> R.R. Palmer, "Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bulow: From Dynastic to National War," in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 91-122.

<sup>18</sup> Charles F. and Margaret G. Hermann, "An Attempt to Simulate the Outbreak of World War I," *American Political Science Review* LXI (Fall 1967), pp. 400-416.

<sup>19</sup> This situation also led to the rise of a vast body of professional literature on all aspects of war. Books included, most notably, Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

<sup>20</sup> For an assessment of these factors on the actual conduct of war during this period, see, Russell Weigley, *The Age of Battles* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> For a survey of war between the Napoleonic Wars and the Cold War, see, Larry H. Addington, *The Pattern of War Since the Eighteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

<sup>22</sup> Prior to World War I, war plans for the event of conflict included Plan ORANGE for Japan, RED for Great Britain, and BLACK for Germany. By the 1930s, it became evident that the most likely war would not be against a single enemy country but against a combination of enemies. Thus, a series of RAINBOW plans were designed against five possible situations in which a war against the combined Axis adversaries might be fought. See, Russell Weigley, *The American Way of War* (New York: Macmillian Publishing Co., 1973), pp. 313-316.

<sup>23</sup> A staggering number of books have been published about the Cold War. Among the most readable of the traditional interpretations is, Adam Ulam, *The Rivals* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

<sup>24</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 3-126.

<sup>25</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

<sup>26</sup> Lynn H. Miller and Ronald W. Pruessen, eds. *Reflections on the Cold War: A Quarter Century of American Foreign Policy*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974).

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of the backgrounds and assumptions of US leaders who shaped American national security policy from 1945 through the mid-1970s, see, John C. Donovan, *The Cold Warriors: A Policy-Making Elite* (Lexington, D.C. Heath, 1974).

<sup>28</sup> For the influence of the US-USSR rivalry on American policies toward the Third World, see, for example, Pauline Baker, "Africa in the New World Order," *SAIS Review* 10 (Summer/Autumn 1990), pp. 139-152.

<sup>29</sup> An excellent assessment of the reasons for US involvement in Vietnam is, Leslie H. Gelb, "Vietnam: The System Worked," *Foreign Policy* 4 (Summer 1971), pp. 140-167. For an account of the reasons for America's decision to fight in Korea, see, Alexander L. George, "American Policy-Making and the North Korean Aggression," *World Politics* 7 (January 1955), pp. 209-232.

<sup>30</sup> Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War Revisited* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979).

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35 (Spring 1993), pp. 27-47.

<sup>32</sup> A discussion of the Balkan Wars and their relationship to the origins of World War I can be found in, Barbara Tuchmann, *The Guns of August* (New York: Dell, 1962).

<sup>33</sup> A multitude of ferocious conflicts attended the fragmentation of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D., as they did the fall of one of its successor dynasties, the Byzantine Empire, a thousand years later in 1453. For a useful examination of these developments with a focus on wars of the period, see, Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 92-213.

<sup>34</sup> For one view of new trends in international politics and their implications for the United States in world affairs, see, Joseph S. Nye, "Is There a New World Order?" in Carol Rae Hansen, ed., *The New World Order: Rethinking America's Global Role* (Flagstaff: Arizona Honors Academy Press, 1992), pp. 2-17.

<sup>35</sup> Les Aspin, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1994), p. xiii.

<sup>36</sup> An excellent study of small-state conflicts during the period of the great power paradigm in international conflict is contained in, David Vital, *The Survival of Small States: Studies in Small Power/Great Power Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>37</sup> The ideological backdrop of this overall struggle is described by George F. Kennan in a series of lectures he delivered at the National War College in 1946-47. See, Giles D. Harlow and George C. Maerz, eds., *Measures Short of War* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1991).

<sup>38</sup> Herbert K. Tillema, *Appeal to Force: American Military Intervention in the Era of Containment* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1973).

<sup>39</sup> This situation was very similar to the one that existed during the age of imperialism--from the mid-19th through the mid-20th centuries--in world affairs. Nationalist conflicts occurred with considerable frequency in smaller, colonized countries, as indigenous movements directed their efforts at the governing colonial power to achieve independence. In terms of international relations, this violence was significant only insofar as its success affected adversely the strength of the colonizing great power as measured in the aggrandizement of its empire. The individual implications of the colonized state achieving its independence, by contrast, accounted for very little in terms of the structure and operation of the international system. A study of Britain's colonial wars in Africa can be found in, Lawrence James, *The Savage Wars: British Campaigns in Africa 1870-1920* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985).

<sup>40</sup> The conflict between these two competing schools of thought was played out in early debates about the size and role of the US Armed Forces. See, Richard H. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword: The Beginnings of the Military Establishment in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1975).

<sup>41</sup> As argued by Thomas Paine in his famous pamphlet, *Common Sense*, and by George Washington in his *Farewell Address*. For an examination of the importance of the latter speech in establishing the principles of America's disinclination to involve itself in the machinations of European politics, see, Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

<sup>42</sup> America's isolationist policies were encouraged by the protective moat of the oceans and the natural abundance of land and other natural resources available for exploitation. Pursuit of dominion across the continent allowed the United States to be the hegemonic power in its hemisphere by the end of the 19th century. Only through the aggressive pursuit of continentalism

was America able to sustain the remarkable political and economic success it enjoyed throughout the 19th century.

<sup>43</sup> For a look at the origins of America's international activity, see, Samuel F. Wells, Jr., *The Challenges of Power: American Diplomacy, 1900-1921* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990).

<sup>44</sup> For a historical review of this period with an emphasis on America's wars as a key element in its rise to power, see, Geoffrey Perret, *A Country Made by War: From the Revolution to Vietnam--The Story of America's Rise to Power* (New York: Random House, 1989).

<sup>45</sup> Excellent works on America's 19th century wars are available. For the Mexican War, see, John S.D. Eisenhower, *So Far From God: The US War with Mexico 1846-1848* (New York: Random House, 1989). For the Indian Wars, see Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1890* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1973).

<sup>46</sup> For a history of the US Armed Forces, see, Walter Millis, *Arms and Men: A Study in American Military History* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1956).

<sup>47</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 606.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>49</sup> According to Clausewitz, "The smaller the penalty you demand from your opponent, the less you can expect him to try and deny it to you; the smaller the effort he makes, the less you will need to make yourself." Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 81.

<sup>50</sup> Inclusion of the Indian Wars in a category of US wars against foreign opponents is technically incorrect. Although by most measures of cultural homogeneousness the Indians were indeed foreign to American society, they were not geographically located in a foreign country. Nevertheless, because the Indian wars meet most of the criteria that define a war against a foreign opponent, they are included within this category.

<sup>51</sup> In winning its 19th century wars, US sacrifices were very slight and lacked proportionality--at least by a Clausewitzian standard--given the value of the political aims and the level of resistance such objectives would be expected to arouse in the enemy. These were wars of the extreme--conquest--against weak opponents. Both Mexico and the Indian nations were compelled to accept peace on the most objectionable of terms--extensive territorial concessions. Mexico lost over half of her lands, and the Indians, all of theirs. There were, nonetheless, defeats along the way. Although most people believe the United States suffered its greatest military defeat at the hands of the Indian in the 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn, the Harmer and St. Clair campaigns of 1790 and 1791, respectively, were greater disasters. For an assessment of the latter events, see, Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian Wars* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), pp. 69-191. An investigation of the events of 1876 can be found in, Wayne M. Sarf, *The Little Bighorn Campaign* (Conshohocken: Combined Book Inc., 1993).

<sup>52</sup> For a good history of the Spanish-American War, see, G.J.A. O'Toole, *The Spanish War: An American Epic 1898* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984).

<sup>53</sup> An insightful treatment of the American military experience in World War I can be found in, Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986). For the experiences of World War II, see, Geoffrey Perret, *There's A War to be Won* (New York: Random House, 1991).

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of the circumstances surrounding America's entry on the world scene after World War II, see, John L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

<sup>55</sup> A debate ensued within America regarding the usefulness and morality of intervening in Latin American countries with US troops. See, Thomas G. Paterson, *Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973).

<sup>56</sup> For a study of Roosevelt's policies regarding Latin America, see, John Morton Blum, *The Republican Roosevelt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 125-141.

<sup>57</sup> The United States also fought a nasty, but ultimately successful guerrilla war against Philippine insurgents who sought independence after America acquired the Philippine Islands from Spain following the Spanish-American War. For a good assessment of this little-known campaign, see, *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

<sup>58</sup> This was especially true in Vietnam where initial US force commitments considered sufficient to defeat the communist insurgency were found to be inadequate, thereby resulting in sequential force escalations. See, Chester L. Copper, *The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam* (New York: Dodd, Meade, 1970), especially Chapter 4.

<sup>59</sup> This experience followed closely the dictum offered by Clausewitz, "The less involved the population and the less serious the strains within states and between them, the more political requirements in themselves will dominate and tend to be decisive." Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 81.

<sup>60</sup> The experiences of Korea and Vietnam reflected another dynamic of war that Clausewitz also identified, ". . .the original political objects can greatly alter during the course of the war and may finally change entirely since they are influenced by events and their probable consequences." Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 92. Numerous studies have been completed on the conduct and outcome of the Vietnam War, and the "lessons" that should be derived from the experience. A basic account can be found in, Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: US Doctrine and Performance* (New York: Random House, 1977).

<sup>61</sup> For an argument that America did not reduce its goals quickly enough in seeking a negotiated settlement to the Vietnam war, see, Gareth Porter, *A Peace Denied: The United States, Vietnam,, and the Paris Agreement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976).

<sup>62</sup> One author sees the US intervention as ineffective because of the cultural gap between East and West. See, Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972). Other authors have argued that the US military was not properly prepared to fight the Vietnam War effectively. An early advocate of the argument that troops equipped, organized, and trained for large-scale conventional war could not carry out an anti-insurgency campaign successfully was General Maxwell Taylor. Taylor also recognized that insurrectionary warfare was never only a military problem, but always a cojoined political and military problem. See, Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972).

<sup>63</sup> The War of 1812 was America's most unpopular foreign war until the Korean War. Although some authors claim the United States lost the war, most historians accept that it was a draw. The war did convince the British to end their support of Indian Tribes in the Northwest Territory, thereby expediting American settlement of the region. For a thorough study of America's war aims against Canada and the military operations that were conducted in pursuit of those aims, see, Pierre Berton, *The Invasion of Canada, 1812-1813* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980). For a more general study of the war with emphasis on its unpopularity in the United States, see, Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

<sup>64</sup> The standard work on analyzing the decision-making process by which the United States became involved in Korea is, Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision* (New York: Free Press, 1968).

<sup>65</sup> John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), pp. 44-52.

<sup>66</sup> Mueller, *War, Presidents*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>67</sup> For an examination of domestic discontent caused by the Vietnam War and the effects of its influence on US foreign and domestic policy during the period, see, Alexander Kendrick, *The Wound Within: America in the Vietnam Years, 1945-1974* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).

<sup>68</sup> William Watts and Lloyd Free, eds., *State of the Nation* (New York: Universe Books, 1973), p. 258.

<sup>69</sup> One prominent signal of a more cautious US approach to the commitment of American troops abroad was the enactment of the War Powers Resolution by Congress in 1973. It was the first peacetime legislation in history to place restrictions on presidential authority to engage American forces in conflicts overseas and was passed over President Nixon's veto. See, Christopher J. Deering, "The Congress, The President, and War Powers: The Perennial Debate," in James A. Thurber, ed. *Divided Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1991), pp. 171-198.

<sup>70</sup> Bruce W. Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 36 (March 1992), pp. 59-60.

<sup>71</sup> Ilana Kass and Bard O'Neill, "The Persian Gulf War: A Political-Military Assessment," *Comparative Strategy* 11 (April-June 1992), pp. 213-240.

<sup>72</sup> Jentleson, "Prudent Public," pp. 61, 65-71.

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion of the broader implications of the Lebanon War for the US-USSR rivalry in the Middle East, see, Bruce W. Jentleson, "The Lebanon War and Soviet-American Competition: Scope and Limits of Superpower Influence," in S.L. Spiegel, et. al. eds., *The Soviet-American Competition in the Middle East* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1986), pp. 321-339.

<sup>74</sup> Jentleson, "Prudent Public," p. 63.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>76</sup> One approach to how the United States should respond to the disintegration of the USSR and the political chaos that has followed in its wake can be found in, Robert A. Scalapino, "The Crisis of Leninism and the US Response," in Brad Roberts, ed., *US Foreign Policy After the Cold War* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 19-34.

<sup>77</sup> For the background on this decision, see, Jeffrey Clark, "Debacle in Somalia," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Winter 1992/93), pp. 109-123.

<sup>78</sup> During the colonial period of international affairs, great powers retained interests in areas of little economic or commercial value, such as Britain did in Sudan in the 1880s, but such policies were based on sustaining the prestige and integrity of the empire, rather than on altruistic concerns about the welfare of the colonies' inhabitants. Prime Minister Gladstone argued fruitlessly that Britain had no interests in Sudan. His opponents claimed that conquest of Sudan was part of Britain's imperial destiny. The fall of Khartoum and death of General Gordon was decried in London as a stain on British honor, and British forces were dispatched to avenge Gordon's death. James, *Savage Wars*, pp. 3-27.

<sup>79</sup> For more information on the US rationale for its decision to intervene in Somalia, see, Theodore S. Dagne, "UN Security Council and US Congressional Resolutions, January 1 - December 3, 1992," *Congressional Research Service* (December 7, 1992), pp. 1-34.

<sup>80</sup> George J. Church, "How the Somalia Mission Failed," *Time* 142 (October 18, 1993), pp. 42-49.

<sup>81</sup> The Somali case raises another important point about garnering and maintaining public support for using American forces in combat abroad. Public opinion must be cultivated by emphasizing both the positive rewards of using military force and the negative consequences of not doing so. Relying only on one of these incentives usually is inadequate to obtain enough public support throughout an armed conflict. For Somalia, President Bush relied solely on moral arguments and good will to support the decision to provide humanitarian relief to its starving people. The US political leadership, however, did not attempt to demonstrate to the public how America would be worse off if it did nothing to aid Somalia. Therefore, when the US Rangers died, there was overwhelming sentiment among the American populace to withdraw US forces. Americans can better accept immediate sacrifices when they believe that not doing so will be

even more costly in the long-term. The absence of this conviction in the Somali situation doomed the American presence there to the most fragile of foundations, and virtually guaranteed that domestic support for the action would crumble at the first sign of trouble.

<sup>82</sup> A requirement to ascertain beforehand that conditions are appropriate for the effective use of US military power was enunciated by former Defense Secretary Weinberger in his criteria for guiding American responses to crises and the engagement of US military forces. See, Caspar Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power," *DOD News Release*, 609-84 (November 28, 1984), pp. 12-15.

<sup>83</sup> Joelle Attinger and Michael Kramer, "Is Bosnia Worth Fighting For?" *Time* 142 (November 1, 1993), 27-29.

<sup>84</sup> For a good assessment of the intricacies of ethnic fighting in the former Yugoslavia, see, Charles Gati, "From Sarajevo to Sarajevo," *Foreign Affairs*, 77 (Fall 1992), pp. 64-78.

<sup>85</sup> The 1986 bombing of Libya in response to its sponsorship of terrorism provides a recent precedent for the use of punitive military measures to affect an opponent's behavior without the introduction of ground forces as an additional inducement to comply. The Libyan action was widely supported by the American public, with mean approval ratings of well over 65 percent. Jentleson, "Prudent Public," pp. 59-60.

<sup>86</sup> Historically, the delivery of military strikes from remote platforms has proven successful on occasion in coercing an opponent into compliant behavior. For example, the British used the offshore naval bombardment of Chinese cities as an effective instrument in compelling Peking to accept a settlement in the 1840-42 Opium War. Although this case exhibited some of the attributes associated with air strikes in Bosnia, the selective use of British troops to occupy certain key cities was required to bring the Opium War to an end. Moreover, the latter was a nationalist uprising against a colonial power, while Bosnia is a civil war carried on by domestic political factions to dominate the internal political structure of the country. For an excellent study of the Opium War, see, Peter W. Fay, *The Opium War, 1840-1842* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

<sup>87</sup> David B. Ottaway, "US Bosnia Plan Relies on Russia's Help in Croatia," *The Washington Post* (March 20, 1994), p. A32.

<sup>88</sup> For an examination of Franklin Roosevelt's policies in the period before entered the Second World War, see, Robert A. Divine, *The Reluctant Belligerent: America's Entry into World War II* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972).

<sup>89</sup> Weigley, *American Way*, pp. 312-362.

<sup>90</sup> Excerpts from Roosevelt's speech were reproduced on the 50th anniversary of its delivery. See, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, (December 24, 1993), p. A3.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> An excellent analysis of Roosevelt's concern about maintaining public support for the war and his success at galvanizing public opinion can be found in, Richard W. Steele, *The First Offensive: Roosevelt, Marshall, and the Making of American Strategy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 81-99.

<sup>93</sup> Mueller, *War, Presidents*, pp. 23-65.

<sup>94</sup> For more information on Johnson's dilemma, see, William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 247-301.

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, "An Interdependent World," in James A. Hirsch, ed., *Theories of International Relations* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1990), pp. 229-244.

<sup>96</sup> One perspective on this new environment is provided by, Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Changing Relationship Between Economics and National Security," *Political Science Quarterly* 106 (Summer 1991), pp. 256-276.

<sup>97</sup> An early example of this thinking is found in "The International Conciliation Association's Pamphlet No. 70," written in September, 1913. It noted:

Such a peaceful settlement (of international disputes) is being furthered by the recognition that is rapidly permeating the minds of Western peoples that the world is a unit. The wits of diplomats are being sharpened by the discovery that war does not pay. The century . . . (has) produced an economic interweaving and interdependence of the nations that is without parallel in history.

Quoted in, Frederick A. Woods and Alexander Baltzly, *Is War Diminishing? A Study of the Prevalence of War in Europe from 1450 to the Present* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915), pp. 10-11.

<sup>98</sup> Klaus Knorr, "Is International Coercion Waning or Rising?," *International Security* 1 (Fall 1977), pp. 99-100.

<sup>99</sup> Werner Levi, *The Coming End of War* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981).

<sup>100</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (New York: UN Dept. of Public Information, 1992), p. 3.

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, William Pfaff, "Redefining World Power," *Foreign Affairs* 71 (Spring 1992), pp. 34-48.

<sup>102</sup> Debate over the relative stability of a multipolar world versus a bipolar world goes back to the 1960s. For one assessment from that period, see, Richard N. Rosecrance, "Bipolarity, Multipolarity, and the Future," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* X (Spring 1966), pp. 314-327.

<sup>103</sup> Doubts that a shift to multipolarity would result in a more stable world order were raised back in the 1960s. See, for example, Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer, "Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability," *World Politics* XVI (Winter 1964), pp. 390-406.

<sup>104</sup> It is important to note that this represents a continuation of prevailing trends, not a departure from them. Samuel P. Huntington noted in 1986 that "The past four decades have seen the longest sustained period in modern Western history without war between the major powers." Samuel P. Huntington, "American Military Strategy," Chester W. Nimitz Memorial Lecture, *Policy Papers in International Affairs Number 28* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1986), pp. 3-17.

<sup>105</sup> Marguerite Michaels, "Retreat from Africa," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Winter 1992/93), pp. 92-108.

<sup>106</sup> For an examination of this relationship, see, David Henderson, "International Economic Cooperation Revisited," *Government & Opposition* 28 (Winter 1993), pp. 11-35.

<sup>107</sup> This position is reflected in the policies of the Clinton Administration as argued by its Secretary of Labor. See, Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

<sup>108</sup> For a further discussion of this issue, see, Stephen Van Evera, "Why Europe Matters, Why the Third World Doesn't: American Grand Strategy After the Cold War," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 13 (June 1990), pp. 1-51.

<sup>109</sup> For one appraisal, see, Robert E. Hunter, "Starting at Zero: US Foreign Policy for the 1990s," in Brad Roberts, ed., *US Foreign Policy After the Cold War* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 3-18.

<sup>110</sup> Les Aspin, *The Bottom-Up Review: Forces for a New Era* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1993).

<sup>111</sup> Aspin, *Annual Report*.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-16.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> David Binder, "As Ethnic Wars Multiply, US Strives for a Policy," *The New York Times* (February 7, 1993) pp. 1, 16.

<sup>115</sup> Kevin Fedarko, "What Happens if the Big Bad Bear Awakes?" *Time* 143 (March 14, 1994), pp. 43-44.

<sup>116</sup> The intervention of Russian troops in Georgia and Tajikistan demonstrates that such actions can occur in regions that are clearly within the Russian sphere of influence without necessitating a US military response.

<sup>117</sup> Aspin, *Annual Report*, pp. 11-16.

<sup>118</sup> The one major conflict scenario was considered by the Defense Department as a planning guideline, but it was rejected as inadequate to meet America's national security requirements. For an analysis of the assessment, see, Anthony H. Cordesman, "US Defense Policy: Resources and Capabilities," *Working Paper No. 98*, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (December 1993), pp. 33-57.

<sup>119</sup> Support for the deterrence argument is based in part on the observation that even with the forces suggested by the scenario, the United States could not fight two major regional conflicts nearly simultaneously. The actual strategy would be to win one conflict while holding in the second. Once the first conflict had been ended, the second conflict would then be resolved. The claim that we possess a capability to win both conflicts simultaneously, however, might deter a second potential aggressors from starting a war.

<sup>120</sup> The classic work on this subject is, Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

<sup>121</sup> The nuclear doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction was championed in part based on the force savings implied in its war-fighting strategy. By retaining the capability to inflict "unacceptable damage" on the Soviet Union, the United States would not be required to maintain superior, or even equal, numbers of nuclear weapons to win a nuclear war. Strategy, under these circumstances, became focused on calculating the minimum level of force needed to deter. See, for example, McGeorge Bundy, "To Cap the Volcano," *Foreign Affairs* 48 (October 1969), pp. 1-24.

<sup>122</sup> Comparative assessments of force options that are linked to various regional conflict scenarios show that significant force savings can be gained by choosing the "win one major regional conflict (MRC)" criterion. By contrast, the "win one MRC and hold in one MRC," and the "win two nearly simultaneous MRCs" have substantially higher force requirements. Cordesman, "US Defense Policy," p. 37.

<sup>123</sup> George Rathjens, "The Dynamics of the Arms Race," *Scientific American* 220 (April 1969), pp. 15-25.

<sup>124</sup> Force levels associated with the one major conflict scenario can be found in Cordesman, *Working Paper*, p. 37.

<sup>125</sup> Aspin, *Annual Report*, pp. 11-16.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-74.

<sup>127</sup> For a useful study of this issue, see, Donald M. Snow, *Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peace-Enforcement: The US Role in the New International Order* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 1993).

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, James R. Graham, ed., *Non-Combat Roles for the US Military in the Post-Cold War Era* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1993).

<sup>129</sup> Aspin, *Annual Report*, p. 67.

<sup>130</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, "Recipe for Chaos," *The Washington Post* (September 8, 1993), p. A32.

<sup>131</sup> "Lessons" from the Somali experience are already being derived. See, Robert B. Oakley, "What We Learned in Somalia," *The Washington Post* (March 20, 1994), p. C7.

<sup>132</sup> For example, the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, which ended the 1866-67 Sioux War, defined nearly all of present South Dakota west of the Missouri River as an Indian reservation on which no white might trespass without Indian consent. To preserve the peace, the US Cavalry was charged with enforcing this separation of the races by maintaining a presence along the boundary of the two territories, and it tried with varying degrees of enthusiasm and success to carry out this mission. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills in 1874 opened the floodgates of white advancement, and war again ensued. See, John S. Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), pp. 1-23.

<sup>133</sup> An informative examination of this role is contained in, William H. Lewis, ed., *Military Implications of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1993).

<sup>134</sup> Aspin, *Annual Report*, p. 67.

<sup>135</sup> Madeleine K. Albright, "Opening Statement Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee," *USUN Press Release 164-(93)* (October 20, 1993), p. 4

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>137</sup> Aspin, *Annual Report*, p. 64.

<sup>138</sup> Daniel Williams, "Clinton Peacekeeping Policy to Set Limits on Use of US Troops," *The Washington Post* (February 6, 1994), p. 24.

<sup>139</sup> Dole discussed the purposes of his bill in, Bob Dole, "Peacekeepers and Politics," *The New York Times* (January 24, 1994), p. A43.

<sup>140</sup> This finding is taken from the Correlates of War Project. See, J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *The Wages of War 1816-1965: A Statistical Handbook* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), p. 215.

<sup>141</sup> Melvin Small and J. David Singer, "Conflict in the International System, 1816-1977: Historical Trends and Policy Futures," in Charles Kegley and Patrick J. McGowan, eds., *Challenges to America: US Foreign Policy in the 1980s* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1979).

<sup>142</sup> William Domke, "Technology, Lethality, and Conflict in the 1990s," *New Perspectives for a Changing World Order* (Washington, D.C.: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1991), pp. 269-283.

<sup>143</sup> Gene I. Rochlin and Chris C. Demchak, "The Gulf War: Technological and Organization Implications," *Survival* 33 (June 1991), pp. 260-273.

<sup>144</sup> Aspin, *Annual Report*, p. 9.

<sup>145</sup> For a corresponding view, see, Earl E. Keel, Jr., "Toward a New National Defense Strategy: Policing the Battlefields of the Cold War," *Comparative Strategy* 11 (October-December, 1992), pp. 357-372.

<sup>146</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of this issue, see, Paul Bracken, "The Military After Next," *The Washington Quarterly* 16 (Winter 1993), pp. 157-174.

<sup>147</sup> See, for example, Stephen Van Evera, "American Intervention in the Third World: Less Would be Better," *Security Studies* I (Autumn 1991), pp. 1-24.

<sup>148</sup> The study reported that while all but one of the 21 large-scale international wars in the 20th century ended in peace treaties, armistice, truce, or cease-fire agreements, only two of the 36 civil, revolutionary, and anti-colonial wars ended in an armistice or cease-fire. See, Berenice A. Carroll, "How Wars End: An Analysis of Some Current Hypotheses," *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (Summer 1969), pp. 296-321.

<sup>149</sup> Quoted in, Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Years, 1965-1990* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 205.